Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Afghanistan, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Iraq (emigration banned).

Indians died in Gulf countries

1864. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian employees and workers who died in the gulf countries in the last three years;

(b) the details of compensation they received;

(c) the number and details of cases where compensation has not been received; and

(d) Government's action in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) As per the information received from the Indian Missions in Gulf Countries Indian employees and workers died during the last three years, year-wise, are as follows:

Year	No. of death
2004	2697
2005	2940
2006	3310

The figure of deaths in Oman for the last three years is 1060.

(b) to (d) Out of these only 1553 cases were eligible for compensation. In about 643 cases compensation has been paid. The rest are pending and are being pursued by the Indian Missions. The Missions are pursuing these cases with the local authorities for expediting the cases.

Cancellation of visas of Indians in UK

1865. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the UK Government has cancelled the visas of Indian professionals working there;

(b) whether Government have held any talks with the UK Government on this matter; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) The UK Home Office, in March, 2006, presented to the Parliament the new immigration guidelines "A Point-based System: Making Migration Work for Britain" and announced its implementation from 7th November 06. According to the new guidelines, for an extension of visa or for Indefinite Leave of Settlement, a person staying in the UK under Highly Skilled Migration Programme (HSMO) has to earn 75 points. The revised rules require the applicants to re-qualify through a stringent point-based system on the basis of his age, earnings and UK experience for thier further visa extension as against economic activity alone when they entered into the UK.

(b) and (c) The High Commission of Indian, London has taken up the matter with British Parliamentarians. It has been informed by the Govt. of UK that the point based system is designed to allow highly skilled people to migrate to the UK over long run. They have further informed that to those who are already in the UK, Government will be as helpful as possible. The necessity of not applying the amendments with retrospective effect, and the need to have some policy in the transition period in order to ameliorate the impact of these amendments on Indian professionals entering UK has been highlighted to the UK Government.

Devolution index for Panchayats

1866. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry are proposing a scheme for Panchayats to get extra funds by competing with each other;

(b) the details of the reported ' Devolution Index" constituted by his Ministry; and;

(c) whether Ministry is suggesting a separate funding plan to speed up the decentralization process?